



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
CREEKS RESTORATION/WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

REGULAR MEETING

December 10, 2008

Council Chambers, 735 Anacapa Street, 2nd Floor

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hochman called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

ROLL CALL

Committee members present: Chair Hochman, Michael Jordan, Lee Moldaver, Roger Schlueter, George Weber, Daniel Wilson (5:34pm)

Committee members absent:

Liaison members present: Park and Recreation Commissioner Beebe Longstreet

Liaison members absent: Councilmember Iya Falcone, Planning Commissioner John Jostes

Staff present: Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager Cameron Benson, Creeks Supervisor George Johnson, Creeks Program Assistant Liz Smith

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion:

Committee members Moldaver/Jordan to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 12, 2008.

Vote:

Voice vote 4/0; Weber abstained.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one wished to speak.

COMMITTEE MEMBER AND STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

Mr. Wilson arrived at 5:34pm.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Benson reported that the Tea Fire burned approximately 1,600 acres in the Sycamore Creek Watershed, significantly impacting the environment, particularly concerning water quality, habitat, and erosion. The City has been working with County Flood Control, Caltrans, and private landowners to mitigate potential erosion.

Mr. Benson reported that the Plan Santa Barbara General Plan Update will be going to City Council on Thursday, December 11 and on Tuesday, December 16. Issues raised by the Committee have been incorporated into the Draft Policy Preferences Report. Council is preparing to begin an Environmental Impact Report, with subsequent scoping meetings for public input.

Mr. Jordan asked whether funds are available for restoration on private property affected by the Tea Fire.

Mr. Benson reported that some funds are available for revegetation, and that the City has communicated with the Santa Barbara Contractor's Association, American Institute of Architects (AIA), and local landscape architects to inform them of the Creek Tree Assistance Program. Mr. Benson noted that the Community Environmental Council will be hosting an event called "From Ashes to Opportunity" on Saturday, December 13, to focus on green building practices for community members rebuilding their homes.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Benson reported that the Education and Outreach Subcommittee met on November 24 to discuss results of the Public Opinion Survey. No action was taken, and the Subcommittee will hold subsequent meetings to move forward with updating the Public Education Plan.

BUSINESS ITEMS

9a. Mission Creek Fish Passage Project – Caltrans Channel

Recommendation:

That the Committee:

- a) Receive a presentation on the proposed fish passage project at the Caltrans Channel on Mission Creek.
- b) Recommend that Council authorize staff to enter into an agreement with the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District (FCD) to modify the Caltrans Channel to allow fish passage, and maintain the project as necessary.

Documents:

Staff Report – December 2008

Power Point Presentation – December 2008

Speakers:

George Johnson, Creeks Supervisor

Motion:

Committee members Moldaver/Schlueter to recommend to City Council that they authorize staff to complete the agreement within the parameters and financial expectations outlined by staff.

Public Comment:

Mr. Brian Trautwein of the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) expressed his support of the project, and noted that the EDC will continue to seek grant funding and work with the City on the project.

Committee Questions/Discussion:

Committee members asked questions regarding the population of steelhead in Mission Creek; when the project will be complete; whether the "side pockets" design has been used elsewhere; and, who will pay for maintenance of the channel.

Mr. Johnson reported that during 2008, six steelhead over 16" were seen attempting to travel upstream, and that above the barriers there is a population of rainbow trout, which are potentially the same species as steelhead; that staff hopes to complete the upper channel in 2011 and the lower in 2012; and, that the "side pockets" design has not been proven yet, but a similar concept was used in Corte Madera, and Goleta is considering using the design on San Jose Creek.

Mr. Benson reported that maintenance is part of the agreement staff is working on with Flood Control, and that Flood Control will maintain its part of the channel, and the part that will be modified by the project will be maintained by the City.

Committee members asked questions regarding whether another agency will be able to build a barrier above the project and circumvent this project; and, whether the steelhead are able to spawn lower in the watershed.

Mr. Johnson reported that because steelhead are endangered, the National Marine Fisheries Service would not allow new barriers to be built; and, that in the lower watersheds steelhead are not as successful at spawning due to low oxygen levels, higher temperatures, less food availability, and more predation.

Public Comment:

Mr. Matt McGoogan of the National Marine Fisheries Service expressed his support of the project.

Committee Discussion:

Committee members asked questions regarding the grant application with the California Department of Fish and Game; whether other barriers in the watershed will affect the success of the project; whether the section of creek from the channel to Tallant Road is good steelhead habitat; and, what the timing of projects would be.

Mr. Johnson reported that a grant application for \$500,000 was submitted, but status is unknown at this time; that some of the barriers are small and easier to remove, and that rainbow trout are living there now, and so steelhead can live there; that the habitat from the channel to Tallant Road is rated moderate, but does not have water year round; and, that if work is completed as scheduled, the Tallant Road project would be constructed before the Caltrans Channel is complete.

Vote:

Unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Hochman agreed to represent the Committee at City Council regarding the General Plan Update, and appointed Mr. Moldaver to attend in his place if he is not available.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Committee Members Schlueter/Jordan to adjourn.

Chair Hochman adjourned the meeting at 6:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Benson
Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager